

**Lake Michigan Fisheries Team  
September 8, 2005  
USFWS offices, Green Bay, WI**

**Draft Notes –prepared by Bill Horns**

**Present:** Steve Hogler, Kevin Kapuscinski, Mike Donofrio, Matt Mangan, Lee Meyers, Bill Horns, Brad Eggold, Matt Coffaro, Paul Peeters, Steve Fajfer, Tom Hansen, George Boronow.

**1. Review/revise/cull agenda**

**2. Review/approve meeting notes from July 5-6, 2005**

**3. Brief updates**

Time was allowed for short updates and reminders of topics of interest. The following were mentioned.

- September 22 public presentation of the new walleye management for the Milwaukee River (Brad Eggold).
- Funding and plans for streamside rearing of sturgeon on the Milwaukee and Manitowoc Rivers (Brad Eggold).
- The 60/40 NER/SER stocking quota ratio (Brad Eggold). [The primary concern right now has to do with the distribution of yearling cohos. Dick Rebicek will propose a solution. It was agreed that a future LMFT meeting should have as a full agenda item the review of stocking quotas for all species, with consideration given to in future years submitting a single Lake Michigan/Green Bay stocking request with percentage allocations to ports. Bill Horns will discuss with Al Kaas.]
- Status of commercial fishing regulation re-write (Tom Hansen).
- Yellow spots on salmon (Paul Peeters).
- New proposal for Menominee River walleye regulation changes (Mike Donofrio). [Mike Donofrio and Tom Hansen will prepare a memo to Mike Staggs and Steve Hewett arguing for moving this forward together with the Menominee River sturgeon proposal, separate from the rule package going to 2006 spring hearings.]
- Likely timetable for Menominee River sturgeon regulation changes (Mike Donofrio.)
- WF/GLSFC meeting, Sunday, September 18.
- Fish kill on Oconto (Mike Donofrio). [See fish kill data base entry 58 or 59 in FHCOMMON.]
- Muskie gamete collection plan (Kevin Kapuscinski).
- Use of Interjurisdictional Fisheries Funds (Mike Toney).

**4. Yellow perch regulations on Green Bay**

Background. On October 12, public hearings will be held on NRB Order FH-27-05, a rule to increase the total annual commercial harvest of yellow perch from Green Bay from 20,000 to 60,000 pounds, increase the daily sport fishing bag limit on Green Bay from 10 to 25, and remove the 7/1/06 sunset date. Hearings will be held in Peshtigo and Green Bay. Since the rule proposal was developed, the summer trawl survey has been completed and some of the data have been reduced to graphical form. When the rule was initially presented to the NRB in August, it was stated that to the extent possible, new data from the summer trawl surveys would be made available at the hearings and the Department would consider those data before bringing a final rule proposal back to the NRB for adoption in December.

Action. The LMFT reviewed data from the 2005 trawl survey and concluded that it would not be appropriate to recommend any change to the rule at this time. The data revealed that a fair number of yoy yellow perch were produced in 2005, and suggested that survival of the 2003 year class from

2004 to 2005 was similar to second-year survival rates of strong 1992 and 1998 year classes. Matt Mangan will look into the feasibility of analyzing creel survey data through September, for presentation and discussion at the October hearings. Matt will also attempt to have samples from the commercial harvest aged in time for the December NRB action on this rule, so that we can know which year classes are contributing to that harvest.

## **5. Lake trout restoration**

Background. The Lake Michigan Lake Trout Task Group completed a draft lake trout restoration plan earlier this summer. The Lake Michigan Committee now must decide how to proceed with the Plan. The LMC hopes to reach consensus in time to adopt a final Plan at the March LMC meeting. Action. The LMFT reviewed the Plan. Bill Horns will post a copy of FHCOMMON for all to attach comments to in the next couple of weeks. Bill will then draft an overall LMFT comment for review by the team.

## **6. Lakewide stocking conference – Sept. 24**

Background. A lakewide stocking conference will be held at UW-Parkside on Saturday, September 24. The meeting announcement and a background “white paper” are available on our Lake Michigan web page. Action. Discussion.

## **7. Great Lakes Study Committee meeting**

Background. The Great Lakes Study Committee of the Conservation Congress will meet on Friday, September 9. The GLSC typically focuses on Great Lakes resolutions from the previous spring’s hearings and on Department rule proposals likely to be on the next spring questionnaire. In addition they take up whatever issues may arise, which could be any of the topics discussed by the LMFT. We will certainly discuss the commercial fishing re-write, the salmon conference, the yellow perch rule, and the Milwaukee River walleye management plan. Tom Hansen and Bill Horns will attend. The three resolutions that will be considered this year are as follows:

- ✓ (proposed by Gary Nault in Door County and approved 36-2) Rule 1. Reduce the daily bag limit to 3 smallmouth bass in Lake Michigan and Green Bay. Rule 2. Close smallmouth bass fishing during spawning season in Lake Michigan and Green Bay.
- ✓ (proposed by Jerry Daubner in Door County and approved 28-7). Prohibit culling and removal of fish off spawning beds during fishing tournaments.
- ✓ (proposed by Steven Alt in Milwaukee County and approved 45-38). Adjust yellow perch quotas to achieve an 85% allocation to sport fishers.

Action. LMFT comments on the Nault and Daubner proposals were mixed, and no recommendation was developed. The LMFT was not sure what the intent of the Alt proposal was, since the Department does not set sport fishing quotas. He may be requesting a review of the policy of seeking long-term balance (50-50 by number) between sport and commercial harvests of yellow perch.

## **8. Next meeting date and location – November 16 at the Plymouth Service Center or (if available) the Wells Fargo Room at Lakeshore Technical College.**